



City of Seattle
Human Services Department

Date: January 31, 2014

To: Councilmember Sally Clark, Chair
Housing Affordability, Human Services and Economic Resiliency Committee

Tom Rasmussen, Councilmember
Kshama Sawant, Councilmember
Mike O'Brien, Councilmember

From: Catherine Lester, Interim Director (6-1143)
Human Services Department

Re: Human Services Department response to City Council Green Sheet 83-1-A-1, adding \$580,000 to provide emergency housing/shelter and long term housing to homeless families and young adults.

This memorandum transmits the Seattle Human Services Department's (HSD) response to the Seattle City Council's Green Sheet, 83-1-A-1, included in the 2014 Adopted Budget, requesting that HSD, in collaborative partnership with the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, Building Changes, United Way of King County, and others provide a report to the Housing Affordability, Human Services and Economic Resiliency Committee detailing expansion of activities that provide emergency housing/shelter and long term housing to homeless families and young adults.

The attached report provides information regarding the expansion of the YWCA Late Night Program to include a "Crisis Response Center for Homeless Families" and partnerships that better connect the families served by the YWCA Late Night Program to Family Housing Connection (FHC), the coordinated entry system for families, and safe, stable housing. The report also includes information regarding a plan to retain 20 existing shelter beds for young adults (ages 18-24).

Council added \$580,000 in GSF funding to provide emergency housing/shelter and long term housing to Homelessness Families and Young Adults (ages 18-25).

- \$450,000 was added to assist homeless families, especially women and children living on the streets, in cars, in encampments, and/or fleeing domestic violence. Council appropriated these funds to Finance General pending the receipt of a proposal from HSD to implement a regional program to assist homeless families.

HSD Proposal:

- The \$450,000 will be used to expand an existing YWCA Late Night Program to include a Crisis Response Center for Homeless Families in downtown Seattle at the YWCA's Seneca Building on Fifth Avenue. The majority of funding (91%) will go to direct client assistance and a small portion (9%) will enhance staff capacity at the YWCA. The client assistance funding will be flexible to meet the needs of families, and may include the following: hotel/motel vouchers, transportation, background checks, expenses related to reducing housing barriers such as obtaining documentation or debt reduction, diversion, move-in/housing fees, childcare assistance, clothing and food.
- It is anticipated that the Crisis Response Center model could be duplicated in areas outside of Seattle. HSD would like to report back to Council on efforts for expansion to other communities 6 months following the implementation of the Crisis Response Center.
- \$130,000 was added to retain 20 existing shelter beds for young adults ages 18-24. At the end of 2013, foundation funding that supported the 20 existing shelter beds ended. Alternative funding sources are being pursued, but without additional City funding, these beds would not be available in 2014. Council placed a proviso on these funds pending a report that confirms that public or private funds matching the City's contribution for these shelter beds has been secured.

HSD Proposal:

- Provide \$130,000 in GSF to the YouthCare Orion Multi-Service Center to retain 20 existing shelter beds. This funding, in combination with a commitment from King County to allocate \$120,000, will ensure that shelter services for this population continue throughout 2014. These funds will be administered by HSD in a shelter services contract developed by the Youth and Family Empowerment Division.

I appreciate your commitment and support of our goal that all children and their families in Seattle are safe and have a roof over their heads.

Please forward any questions to Ann-Margaret Webb (6-1133) or Sola Plumacher (3-9404).

CC: Ben Noble, City Budget Office
Jeanette Blankenship, City Budget Office
Lisa Mueller, City Budget Office
Mike Fong, Office of Policy and Innovation
Traci Ratzliff, Council Central Staff
Jason Johnson, HSD Community Support and Assistance Division
Sola Plumacher, HSD Community Support and Assistance Division
Ann-Margaret Webb, HSD Community Support and Assistance Division
Darryl Cook, HSD Youth and Family Empowerment Division
Grace McClelland, HSD Youth and Family Empowerment Division
Nick Codd, Building Changes
Mark Putnam, Committee to End Homelessness in King County
Lauren McGowan, United Way of King County

Seattle Human Services Department
Proposal for Families Experiencing Homelessness (\$450,000 in Finance General)
Seattle City Council Green Sheet 83 -1- A- 1

A. What will HSD Funding Cover

Funding from Green Sheet 83-1-A-1 will provide for hotel/motel vouchers, client assistance to rapidly rehouse families, and a limited amount of increased staff capacity at the YWCA. The Crisis Center model leverages existing resources, including existing HSD investments in the Late Night Program, existing staff capacity at the YWCA and existing space at the YWCA's Seneca Building, where the Crisis Center will be located.

B. Need for Crisis Services For Families

A crisis response system that works in cooperation with FHC, the coordinated entry system for families, 1) can move homeless families off the street immediately, 2) provides emergency housing that is safe and appropriate for families, and 3) provides immediate access to housing placement services is urgently needed in Seattle.

There are an estimated 200 families on the FHC waiting list who are living in places not fit for human habitation in Seattle and King County. These families have been prioritized for housing placement in Family Housing Connection since November 2013; however this does not result in same day access to shelter, housing or other related services. Currently, local programs do not provide for an immediate, crisis response for all homeless families who are living in places not meant for human habitation, other than the City of Seattle funded Late Night Program.

The YWCA's Late Night Program has served as an unofficial crisis response system for families who are living in places not meant for human habitation since its inception in 2009, with the City of Seattle acting as the sole funder of the program. The Late Night Program has provided same day removal from the streets and into a hotel or motel for families referred by the Seattle Police Department, Seattle Public Schools, hospitals, encampments, Kids Plus and Child Protective Services, with placement into motels provided seven days a week, with day and evening access.

The City has increased funding annually to Late Night in an effort to keep up with the demand for services; in 2013 Late Night's budget was \$307,500. The majority of families served came from encampments. In 2013 the program provided 147 homeless families with hotel/motel vouchers, and through case management placed 20 families directly into permanent housing. (The YWCA's Rapid Rehousing Program moved an additional 38 families into permanent housing, the majority of which were originally placed into emergency housing from the Late Night Program.) 14 families were moved into transitional housing and 78 were placed into emergency housing. 16 families left after receiving case management, resource referrals and/or client assistance; their destinations vary but were not able

to be confirmed. Of the remaining families, 5 are scheduled to move into transitional housing and the remainder will be moving into emergency housing or non-time limited housing.¹

C. Solution: Interim Crisis Center

Expanding and enhancing the Late Night Program to include a Crisis Response Center for Homeless Families in downtown Seattle at the YWCA's Seneca Building on Fifth Avenue would provide safe, emergency housing to homeless families living in places not fit for human habitation in the evenings and weekends after traditional business hours, when 2-1-1, FHC and family emergency housing programs in the area are closed or unable to accept new participants. Families referred to the Crisis Center would receive immediate access to hotel/motel vouchers and access to case management services within 24-48 hours. This ensures the emergency needs of families experiencing homelessness are met, while also connecting them with the best practice housing assessment and placement strategies currently being implemented in our community.

D. Service Delivery Model

Expanding Late Night to include the Crisis Center will allow phone referrals 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Crisis Center will not operate as a drop-in center for families without referrals. Referrals will be handled by YWCA staff with experience with the Late Night program, and connecting families with resources. Families will be referred to the Crisis Center through FHC, and from the agencies currently providing referrals to the Late Night Program: Kids Plus, the Seattle Police Department, Seattle Public Schools and Child Protective Services. Families will be immediately connected with hotel/motel vouchers or basic shelter as well as other essential hygiene and nutritional needs.

Within 24-48 hours of accessing services at the Crisis Center, case managers will meet with every family to ensure they are already on the FHC wait list or are signed up for an appointment to be assessed by FHC. To date, the majority of families assisted through the Late Night Program were already on the FHC roster, with the exception of families coming from outside the region who were unfamiliar with our family homelessness system. We expect this to be the case in 2014 as well. The intent of the Crisis Center is to work in cooperation with FHC and within the Family Homelessness Initiative in order to maintain the first come, first served policy necessary to ensure coordinated entry runs smoothly and equitably. While the family is waiting for a housing opening to become available through coordinated entry, the Crisis Center will be providing them with emergency housing in the form of hotel/motel vouchers and working to reduce their housing barriers.

Within 48 hours YWCA case managers will assess each family to determine their eligibility for mainstream resources. Early in the process, the family will also be assessed to see if it is possible to divert them from homelessness, through mediation with friends or family who may be able to offer housing, and through flexible funding that can be used to help families return home when safe and appropriate to do so. Case managers for the Crisis Center are based out of the YWCA's location at The Willows on South Myrtle Street, and will travel to each family to provide case management services. Short-term case management with an emphasis on progressive engagement will be provided along with

¹ Data on performance objectives comes from invoices from the 2013 YWCA Late Night Contract.

information and referral services, with the intent of placing the family into housing identified through Family Housing Connection. Specific services to meet the needs of children and infants will be provided via referral, with the assistance of Kids Plus.

Kids Plus will partner with the Crisis Center as a referral resource for families in encampments and on the streets, and as a resource for YWCA staff to help place families appropriately and connect them with the correct resources. Kids Plus staff will be offered space at The Willows to better facilitate communication and support between Kids Plus and the Crisis Center case managers.

We estimate that 100 families will be served by the Crisis Center during the first ten months of operation (March 1, 2014-December 31, 2014).

Regional Approach/Regional Funding

It is anticipated that the enhanced Crisis Response Center model could be duplicated in areas outside of Seattle, if need warrants this. The YWCA, in addition to the Late Night program, has separate funding from the Federal Emergency Management Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) and the City of Seattle to serve domestic violence survivors in Seattle. Outside of Seattle, the YWCA has expertise and experience providing hotel/motel vouchers, and has attracted funding support for these programs. In Snohomish County EFSP funds the hotel/motel program, and in South King County, the hotel/motel voucher program is operated with support from EFSP, King County and some suburban cities. HSD would like to report back to Council on efforts for expansion to other communities 6 months following the implementation of the Crisis Response Center.

E. Regional System Transformation

A Crisis Center aligns with the system transformation work currently being undertaken in King County by the Committee to End Homelessness and the Family Homelessness Initiative, led by King County and the United Way. The City of Seattle is an active participant in this system transformation, along with other regional funders and service providers. Part of this transformation of the system serving homeless family involves moving towards solutions that embrace national best practices, like rapid rehousing, extremely flexible funding to reduce housing barriers and the use of progressive engagement. Crisis Center staff will be utilizing these best practices with families.

As stated earlier, the Crisis Center will also be part of the coordinated entry system for homeless families. Family Housing Connection will refer families to the Center, and Center staff will be contractually obligated to connect any family referred from a source other than FHC to FHC if they are not already connected.

F. Assessment and Monitoring

HMIS/Safe Harbors

Families receiving services through the Crisis Center will be entered into HMIS. Performance measures will include the number of families placed into safe emergency housing (hotel/motel vouchers housing,

diverted from homeless and/or placed into permanent housing. In addition, housing stability at 6 months will also be measured to determine long term effectiveness of program interventions.

G. Learning Circles

Following the model being used in the recently launched pilots for Rapid Rehousing and Diversion, learning circles consisting of staff from the Human Services Department, the YWCA, Kids Plus, Family Housing Connection, referral agencies and other stakeholders will meet regularly throughout 2014 in order to make adjustments and provide support for the Crisis Center pilot as needed.

H. Conclusion

Providing an emergency response system that works in cooperation with coordinated entry and provides immediate relief to families is an important step to take in improving our region's family homelessness response. HSD expects that the addition of a Crisis Center to the current portfolio of funded programs aimed at supporting the needs of homeless families will result in a shortened duration of homelessness and thereby reduce the trauma families have experienced. Over time, depending on the success of regional efforts to end family homelessness, it is possible that the Crisis Center may be able to be phased out or reduced altogether. In the interim, however, like the other best practices being piloted in 2014, the Crisis Center model may need to be adapted once implementation begins. HSD proposes to provide a report back to City Council in September, with the intention of sharing what has worked well and what adaptations need to be made to improve the model.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Proposed Crisis Center Service Flow Chart

**Seattle Human Services Department
Proposal for Youth/Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness (\$130,000)
Seattle City Council Green Sheet 83 -1- A- 1**

Assisting Homeless Youth/Young Adults (ages 18-25)

Green sheet 83-1-A-1 provides \$130,000 in GSF to HSD to retain 20 shelter beds for young adults (ages 18-24) that were going to be lost due to funding loss at YouthCare.

Proposal:

Provide \$130,000 in GSF to the YouthCare Orion Multi-Service Center to retain 20 existing shelter beds. This funding, in combination with a commitment from King County to allocate \$120,000, will ensure that shelter services for this population continue throughout 2014. These funds will be administered by HSD in a shelter services contract developed by the Youth and Family Empowerment Division. Funding outcomes should focus on connecting young adults with services that move them quickly out of shelter and to permanent housing or being safely reunited with family or other caring adults.

Background on Homeless Youth/Young Adults and YouthCare's Orion Multi-Service Center

Currently there are 60 beds available nightly in Seattle and 15 beds available in the rest of King County for homeless young adults ages 18-24. In the January 2013 county-wide effort to quantify homeless youth and young adults, there were 776 individuals who were homeless or unstably housed. Of this number 99 young adults were categorized as homeless.

YouthCare's Orion Multi-Service Center (1828 Yale Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101) provides a continuum of services to Seattle's population of at-risk, homeless and street-involved youth, ages 13-24, many of whom have run away or been ejected from home. The Orion Center provides a pathway for homeless youth and young adults to connect with on-site, community, and mainstream services. The types of services that youth and young adults will receive or access through the Orion Center include:

- Basic needs including food, clothing, showers, laundry, transportation, voicemail, and hygiene items;
- On-site chemical dependency;
- Crisis response, conflict resolution, and family reconciliation;
- Access to health care services via partnerships with 45th Street and Country Doctor clinics;
- Housing referrals for emergency shelter, transitional housing, and long-term housing;
- Education including on-site Seattle Public High School and GED program;
- Employment training ranging from basic job-ready skills to a certificate program in computer technology;
- Legal services;
- Recreational activities focused on engagement and building trust;
- Referral and application assistance with mainstream services such as food stamps, TANF, Medicaid, etc., and;
- Skill building (independent living skills related to maintaining a job, housing, education, etc.).

Issue:

At the end of 2013, foundation funding supporting 20 shelter beds at YouthCare's Orion Multi-Service Center will end. In 2012, these beds provided safe, temporary shelter for 268 young adults. In addition, these beds were at 98% occupancy for the year. Alternative sources of funding are being sought but without adequate backfill these beds will not be available in 2014, resulting in a 33% reduction in beds for young adults. A total of \$250,000 is needed to fully fund the continuation of these beds.

Attachment 1: Proposed Crisis Center Service Flow Chart

